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ABSTRACT

This action research project evaluated a program for increasing parental involvement for 56 students in targeted first grade classrooms in an elementary school of 311 students. A review of literature showed that lack of parental and community support, undeveloped parent-teacher partnerships, time constraints, and uninviting school climates were probable causes of the problem with parental involvement. Interventions targeted three objectives: (1) planning and implementing special school activities; (2) clarifying expectations for parental roles in a child's education; and (3) developing and strengthening active parent-teacher partnerships. Analysis of pre- and post-intervention surveys, family attendance records, and records of take-home activity participation indicated that parental involvement had increased as a result of the intervention. Steps to slightly increase parental involvement were identified: (1) numerous and varied opportunities for participation; (2) realistic expectations; (3) creating a sense of ownership on the part of parents; and (4) a positive and accessible atmosphere in the classroom. (Thirty-one appendices include survey forms, checklists, take-home activity forms, and invitations to school activities. Contains 32 references.) (DLH)

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INCREASING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT THROUGH THE USE OF MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

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Title: Increasing Parental Involvement Through the Use of Motivational Activities

This report describes a program for increasing parental involvement for the students of the targeted first grade classrooms. Evidence of the existing problem includes the lack of family attendance at school functions, parents' failure to follow through on monitoring their child's academic and social responsibilities, and the lack of parental support when dealing with inappropriate student behaviors at school.

Researched literature concerning parental involvement in schools confirmed probable causes of the problem. These cause include changes in family structure, increases in mobility of families, and unclear expectations for parental roles in education. According to the professional literature, the following causes were found: lack of parental and community support for education, undeveloped parent-teacher partnerships, time constraints, and uninviting school climates.

This Action Plan implements interventions for increasing parental involvement. These interventions include clarifying expectations for parental roles in their child's education, planning and implementing special school activities, and developing and strengthening active parent-teacher partnerships.

Post intervention data indicated that parental involvement was increased within the targeted first grade classrooms by the use of motivational activities, including implementing special school activities, clarifying expectations, and building active partnerships between parents and school.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The targeted elementary school has experienced a decrease in parental involvement which has interfered with the academic and social development of the students. The targeted population was comprised of all the first grade students enrolled in this elementary school. Evidence for the existence of the problem included the lack of family attendance at school functions, parents' failure to follow through on monitoring their children's academic and social responsibilities, and the lack of parental support when dealing with inappropriate student behaviors at school. This evidence was supported through anecdotal records, parent surveys, and teacher observations.

Immediate Problem Context

This targeted elementary school had a total school population of 311 students. The ethnic make-up of this population included 90% White, 7.1% Black, 2.9% Hispanic, and less than 1% Asian American. The school population included 10.4% low-income families. The school reported 96.0% attendance rate with a student mobility factor of 14.3%. There was no reported chronic truancy.

The school faculty consisted of twelve classroom teachers, one speech and language clinician, two resource teachers responsible for learning disability and Reading Recovery services, one part time counselor, two part time librarians,

specialists covering art, music and physical education, and one full time principal. The support staff included one part time nurse, a full time secretary, two computer lab managers, two custodians, four lunchroom aides, one part time inclusion aide and one part time library aide. The percentage of classroom teachers holding a masters degree was 59% with four teachers currently enrolled in a masters program. The average years of experience for the teachers was 18.4 years.

The original building was constructed in 1952 and six additional classrooms were added in 1968. This single story structure contained 15 classrooms, a gymnasium, which was also used as a cafeteria, a complete library, and a lab equipped with 30 computers.

Educational programs available in the building included Reading Recovery, learning disabilities, speech and language therapy, Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE), Human Growth and Development, Junior Achievement, and a computer lab which was used by students before, during, and after school. Special activities offered included Student Council, Dad's Club sports, band, orchestra, Contiguous Math Challenge (CONTIG), Family Reading Night, an annual carnival, and an all-school end-of-the-year party. The faculty communicated regularly with parents by sending home a monthly newsletter, a weekly schedule of events, and monitoring daily student assignment notebooks.

The Surrounding Community

This elementary school is located in the Quad Cities Metropolitan Area. This area is comprised of over 359,000 people.The major employers of this community are Rock Island Arsenal, Deere and Company, Genesis Medical Center, Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA), Illinois Beef Processors (IBP), and Trinity Medical Center. Seventy-three percent of the area's population has an annual income of over $20,000.

The total school population of this district was 8,220 students. This population was comprised of 4,525 elementary students, 1,300 middle school students, 2,250 high school students, and 150 home tutored or special off-site educated students. The district's school population was comprised of 83% White, 4.5% Black, 11.3% Hispanic, 1% Asian American, and less than 1% Native American. The district facilities included 13 elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, an area special education center, and an early childhood education building. The district was also responsible for providing staff for a home for delinquent juvenile males. This district employed a staff of 554 teachers. Over 150 teachers held masters degrees and 151 held masters degrees plus thirty additional graduate hours.

This district was supported by numerous community, business and industry partners. The community groups included the Board of Education, local units of the Parent Teacher Association, local teacher, custodial and secretarial unions, and over 50 school and business partnerships. The Booster Club supported athletics at all levels and has contributed over $330,000 during the past eight years. In the seven year history of the Public Schools Foundation, this organization had contributed over $460,000 for special curriculum projects throughout the district.

This community had faced many issues concerning its schools. Large class size was a constant focus of administrators, teachers, and parents. The administration had used the formation of split classes to attempt to alleviate over-crowding, but that was not seen as a positive solution for this problem. This issue was compounded by the open enrollment policy which allowed transfer of students to schools outside their neighborhoods.

Changes in curriculum have raised questions in the community. The implementation of the Whole Language Approach for teaching reading and writing

skills was controversial when first introduced. A concerted effort by teachers, parents, and the district administration was needed to accept and implement this curriculum change. The adoption of a new hands-on mathematics program has brought about a different approach to teaching mathematics. This adoption has caused both teachers and parents to reevaluate the methods for teaching mathematics.

Over the last few years there have been many administrative changes within this district. These changes have caused inconsistencies throughout the school community. The lack of continuity with district policy has created a decline in confidence and support of administrative decisions. The community's perception of the leadership of this district has been influenced by this issue.

National Context of the Problem

Strengthening the relationship between families and schools as partners is a local, state and national concern. In Florida, the development and implementation of a parent outreach practicum to increase school involvement of fourth grade parents was used (Weitock, 1991). Parent-teacher workshops were designed to help parents realize their valuable role in their children's education. Modeling techniques and hands-on activities were used to teach parents, teachers, and children how to work together. The results of the practicum were derived from data collection, checklists, questionnaires, and surveys. According to Weitock (1991), the outcomes were positive. Attendance at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and workshops increased considerably. Teachers became increasingly involved and encouraged by parents' responses. There was also an increase in parents' and students' self-esteem. Results demonstrate the importance of parent-teacher cooperation and parent involvement in student achievement, behavior, and self-esteem.

In hopes of furthering parental involvement, a parent project was put into action

in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Vopat, 1994). This project used a workshop approach to increase parental involvement. The workshop focused on what children were learning in the classroom and how this learning could be supported at home. According to Vopat (1994), working partnerships between parents and teachers have paid many dividends for the children in these schools and found that evaluation is an integral part of the parent participation project.

Another practicum designed to increase parental involvement was implemented with intermediate grade level students with support systems and experiences to enhance academic success (Jennings, 1993). This practicum focused on utilizing various techniques to improve the degree of involvement of parents and volunteers, to help the students develop a more positive attitude toward self, school, home, and community, and to increase students' school attendance rate. These techniques included a mentor program, parent workshop, a monthly newsletter, a student-of-the-week program, field trips, and tutoring programs. According to Jennings (1993), pre- and post-intervention assessments found that student attendance improved, children developed more positive attitudes toward school, and parent participation in school activities increased.

Parent and family involvement in public education is not a new idea, as evidenced by the number of references found nationwide. The findings support the importance of parental involvement in students' successes in education as well as in life. When parental involvement decreases, so does student self-esteem, academic performance and positive school behavior. The concept of a strong family-school relationship is a comprehensive approach to connecting families and schools to support student learning. Strengthening the relationship between families and schools requires an on-going commitment on the part of educators, administrators, and family members.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Building positive relationships with parents in order for children to achieve successfully should be a goal of the educational process. Parent support is key to a student's success. All parents want their children to be successful. Establishing an open line of communication is vital to a child's growth. Researchers estimate that 40% to 50% of what a child learns occurs in school, and the remaining 50% to 60% comes from the family and community. Without family and larger community involvement, schools will ultimately fail (Brown, 1996). In order to produce life-long learners, the importance of recognizing the positive relationship of parental involvement to our nation's schools is vital. Researchers indicate that knowledgeable, encouraging, involved parents produce children who have more positive attitudes about school and therefore higher aspirations for the future (Epstein, 1993). One of the best ways to promote student success is to involve their parents.

Teachers and parents have a common need for joining together in partnership. The targeted elementary school was experiencing a decrease in parental involvement which interfered with the academic and social development of the students. The targeted population was comprised of all the first grade students enrolled in this elementary school. Evidence for the existence of the problem included the lack of family attendance at school functions, parents' failure to follow through on monitoring

their children's academic and social responsibilities, and the lack of parental support when dealing with inappropriate student behaviors at school. This evidence was supported through the administration of various surveys. These surveys reflected opinions from three sources: parents (Appendix A), school staff (Appendix B) and the targeted school population (Appendix C). Teacher observation checklists have been designed to monitor completion of take-home assignments (Appendix F), parental attendance at school functions (Appendix G) and assignment notebook participation (Appendix H).

Table I indicates the student mobility factor for the targeted population. These percentages represent the number of students transferring in and out of the targeted school in the given year. The factors illustrate the fluctuation in this school.

Table 1
Student Mobility

Year	Enrollment	Mobility
1994-1995	348	15.5%
1995-1996	331	18.3%
1996-1997	309	14.3%
1997-1998	302	14.7%

An additional factor should be noted. The targeted first grade (1998-1999) experienced a significant influx of new families. Projected enrollments for the targeted first grades had been about 40 students, but actual enrollment by Fall 1998 was 56, resulting in the first grades having an addition of seventeen new families. The targeted school had never experienced such an increase at a single grade level.

Of particular note is the fact that the enrollment of the targeted school has

continued to decline, and has impacted the class size and number of classes within this elementary school. Due to this decline, there has been a reduction of one staff member and the creation of a split classroom which has remained in effect to the present.

A survey was administered to the staff of the targeted school asking for opinions on parental involvement in education. Twenty teaching and administrative staff members completed the survey. Table 2 displays the results of this survey.

Table 2

Staff Survey of Parental Involvement in Education

Topic	Agree	Disagree	No Opinion
1. Parental involvement influences student behavior in a positive manner.	100%	0%	0%
2. There has been a decline in parents' involvement with their child's education during the past five years.	70%	25%	5%
3. Parents who are actively involved in their child's education have higher achieving students.	100%	0%	0%

Furthermore, it should be noted that 100% of the staff from the targeted elementary school agreed that parental involvement influences student behavior in a positive manner, and that parents who are actively involved in their child's education have higher achieving students. Seventy per cent agreed that there has been a decline in parental involvement over the past five years.

Probable Causes

The targeted school had experienced a number of various changes in family structure. The number of single-parent families had increased, and the custodial parent is often employed outside the home. There had also been an increase in parental employment outside the home in two-parent families as well. This necessitated the growing need for viable latchkey programs. A growing number of extended families had surfaced and the grandparents may now be the primary care givers for their grandchildren. These factors contributed to the lack of parental involvement within the targeted school.

The targeted school had the unique situation of educating all the students who are based at a local military installation, and consequently had experienced a significant mobility of families. The school neighborhood had experienced a resurgence of rental properties which attributes to the transient nature of the school population. The rising divorce rate had made it necessary for students to divide their home life between two places of residence, which may result in students being unable to complete a full year of school in one building.

Improving communication skills between home and school is vital and one important factor is providing clear expectations for parents. Many parents may not have the necessary skills to help their children in learning and socialization. Many parents lack formal education which makes them unaware of the various resources available to them. Some parents find difficulty communicating with the school because they have felt unwelcome at school in the past. Others may have difficulty talking with teachers as a result of memories of their own school years. Some parents may fear that questions or criticism will put their child at a disadvantage in school. A positive and successful parent-teacher partnership is dependent upon clear

expectations stated for all parties concerned. In order for parents to feel comfortable in the school setting, various opportunities for meaningful involvement must be created.

Researchers have found there is a lack of parental and community support for education. The school should be responsible for developing a coalition among parents, community members, and the schools to strengthen the moral support structure needed to build character in children (Berreth and Berman, 1997). Business and industry have not always displayed a genuine interest in supporting parents and their role in the educational system. New partnerships are being established with schools and businesses, but they often ignore the other important component in the equation: parents (Mannan and Blackwell, 1992).

Parents and teachers share responsibility for creating a working relationship that fosters children's learning. The parents are the child's strongest advocate with the school, and the foundation for good parent-teacher relationships is frequent and open communication (Katz, 1996). Empowering parents will encourage their participation in any partnership. Serving families is as important as receiving services from them. Involving families may not make students successful learners or high achievers, but more students will benefit if they are a part of a successful school-family partnership (Epstein and Connors, 1992).

Parental involvement is one of the most overlooked aspects of American education today. Researchers state many parents fail to realize how important it is to get involved in their child's learning and other parents would like to be involved but have trouble finding the time. All parents and family members should attempt to find the time and make the effort, because researchers have found that when families become involved, their children get better grades and higher test scores, graduate from high school at higher rates, are more likely to go on to higher education, and are

better behaved and have more positive attitudes (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

Researchers note that teachers and parents need to develop attributes that promote a partnership. Teachers can provide a setting that encourages the development of partnership behaviors in parents. If parents sense an inviting school climate, their participation will increase. Researchers describe parent and teacher attributes that support meaningful partnerships. These attributes include warmth, sensitivity, nurturance, positive self-image,and personal competence. Researchers indicate that parents and teachers can create viable partnerships by engaging in joint learning activities, supporting each other in their respective roles and being advocates for children (Swick, 1992).

Students' success in school is benefited by teachers and parents working together toward common goals. Teaming up with parents can produce positive results by working together to ensure academic success, behavioral success, and boost student self-esteem, and increase a feeling of pride in their accomplishments. By forming an effective partnership with parents, teachers show that their commitment to the children is real and sincere (Canter, 1991).

The decline in parental involvement at the targeted elementary school is a result of many individual factors. The changes in family structure, including changes in parental employment, the existence of more extended families, and the increase of single-parent families have contributed to this decline. Parents have many personal factors that can attribute to their lack of involvement, such as not possessing the necessary skills to help their child, lack of formal education, uncomfortable feelings within a school setting, fears that any criticism may reflect poorly upon their child. All of these factors need to be addressed in order to establish a more successful parent-school partnership, and increase the level of parental involvement.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

One of the best ways to promote student success is to involve their parents. Researchers indicate that well-informed, supportive, involved parents produce children who have more positive attitudes about school and higher aspirations for the future. In a National Education Association (NEA) poll, over 90% of teachers in all parts of the country and at all grade levels stated that more home-school interaction would be desirable (Moles, 1982). Educators may know more about child development and how children's lives are affected by learning, but parents know more about their individual children. Both pieces of knowledge form a partnership that helps children reach their fullest potential.

The problems facing American education are not problems of the school alone. To successfully resolve these problems, the relationship between home and school must be addressed. Effective involvement uses the school, community agencies,and businesses to deliver support to families in their important role in the education of their children. Reaching the family must be considered as important as reaching the child. The public has been accustomed to a school-community public relations approach rather than an educational sharing effort.

The value of parent involvement is readily apparent in a research report by the National Committee for Citizens in Education (Holliday, 1990). Researchers report

that programs with strong parent involvement produce students who perform better than students in identical programs that do not involve parents as thoroughly. Collaborating with or involving families in their child's educational programs results in positive outcomes for the child, improved emotional well-being of the families, increased parenting skills, and strengthening of the educational program itself (Karp, 1985). When families are involved in children's education in positive ways, children receive higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior, and graduate at higher rates (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

Building positive relationships with parents in order for children to experience successful achievement should be a goal of the targeted school. Parent support is key to students' success. All parents want their children to be successful. Establishing the network of communication is vital to this goal. Researchers who have conducted more than fifty studies state that when parents get involved, those schools improve dramatically. The students in these studies were more motivated and better behaved in the classroom. The diverse needs of the students were met more effectively, and scores on achievement tests were significantly higher (Fuller, 1993). Researchers state that when teachers frequently use practices to involve families in reading, students gain more in reading than do similar students whose teachers do not involve families. These findings suggest an important connection between parent involvement in particular subjects and student success in those subjects (Epstein, 1992a). If every parent of a child ages 1 through 9 spent one hour reading or working on schoolwork with the child five days a week, parents would annually devote at least 8.7 billion hours to supporting their children's reading. If the child's teacher spent the same one-on-one time, the cost to the American taxpayer would be around $230 billion, which is the same as what the American public pays yearly for the entire K-12 public education

enterprise (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

Numerous programs have been developed to implement the involvement of parents in our nation's schools. One program is The National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE) which offers advice to parents on school-related problems and how to effect positive partnerships with school. Another program titled "Cooperative Communication Between Time and School" is a project which offers parents a series of workshops designed to develop communication skills within families. This project focuses on developing home-school-community relationships that promote academic and social achievement for all children (Fredericks and Rasinski, 1990). An additional program for the promotion of parental involvement is titled "The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education" (NCPIE). This particular program is dedicated to the development of family/school partnerships in schools throughout the United States. This program advocates the involvement of parents in their children's education and fosters relationships between home, school, and community. This organization believes that parent involvement programs should match the needs of the parents, schools, and community (National Coalition for Parent Involvement, 1992).

A program recognizing the importance of the family in promoting literacy, titled "The Partnership for Family Reading", provides literacy experiences that benefit all members of the family. Family literacy is becoming more and more essential in parent involvement initiatives (Chrispeels, 1991). The first grade population in the targeted school participates in monthly reading contests that are designed to include active participation of parents. Each student is expected to reach a designated reading goal for every month by reading with parents. Parents document the time spent reading with their children by returning individual reading logs. All children who reach the monthly goal are rewarded.

The NEA/HSI Teacher-Parent Partnerships builds upon and strengthens

educational bonds among children, parents, and teachers. This partnership consists of activities that are intended to help children feel more successful by doing a real-life activity together with a parent or other adult. This project is designed to help children become more academically motivated and self-disciplined, to provide a framework for parents to work with their children, and to build strong community and parental support for teachers and the role of teaching (Rich, 1987). The targeted first grade population is asked to participate in two specifically designed take-home activities. These activities are returned to school and displayed. Parents are given the opportunity to view these projects and are encouraged to record their comments. Promoting parent participation using these types of programs can have lasting effects on the educational success of students.

There are other benefits resulting from school and family partnerships. When parents are assisted by the schools, they become more aware of their children's education and they interact with their children more. Children see that their parents and teachers communicate. They become more aware that they can talk to someone at home about schoolwork and school decisions (Epstein, 1992b). Parents benefit as well. They develop greater appreciation of their role in their children's education, an improved sense of self-worth, stronger social networks, and even the desire to continue their own education (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

People who work with children play a critically important role because they affect not only the child but the parents as well. Parents are the child's first and most important teachers and will probably have the greatest impact on a child's development. All programs for children will have an impact on the families from which they come and, therefore, these programs must support a good relationship between parents, child, and teacher as a priority. Teachers have the important responsibility of working with and relating to families, not just children (Potter, 1989).

Surveys of parents show that most families want to be able to talk with, monitor, encourage, and guide their children as students, but they say they need more information from the schools about how to help their children at home (Epstein,1992a). Many parents today are unsure how to help their children learn. Some are simply not prepared to be parents. The number of teenage parents has risen dramatically in recent years. Other parents may have had bad experiences with schools themselves and are reluctant to return to school even as a parent, or they may feel intimidated and unsure about the value of their contributions compared with those of a teacher. Many parents say they would be willing to spend more time on homework or other learning activities with their children if teachers gave them more guidance (U.S. Department of Education, 1994b). Feelings of inadequacy, limited school background, or preoccupation with basic necessities may prevent parents from communicating with schools. The school must assume the job initiating communication (Johnson, 1994).

Forty percent of parents across the country believe that they are not devoting enough time to their children's education. Families have many demands on their time. Sixty-six percent of employed parents with children under the age of 18 say that they do not have enough time for their children. More and more parents face the difficult task of raising their children alone. Studies of individual families show that what the family does is more important to students than family income or education (U.S. Department of Education, 1994b). A number of special activity nights are scheduled for the families of the targeted first grade classes. Parents have the opportunity to participate in various projects during the evenings.

Researchers suggest that the best models of parent involvement programs go beyond cooperation and coordination to a true collaboration among home, school, and community. These collaborations should be guided by well-defined expectations of all parties involved, and a common commitment to remove barriers. Collectively,

home, school, and community represent a largely untapped resource for improving our schools and increasing the success of all learners (Revenaugh, 1992). Researchers have identified essential elements of collaboration which include mutual respect for knowledge and skills, honest and clear communication, understanding and empathy, mutually agreed upon goals, shared decision making, open sharing of information, accessibility and responsiveness, joint evaluation of progress, and flexibility in working with each other (Karp, 1993).

Teachers also need guidance when developing a home-school collaboration. Although teacher certification requirements in about half the states mention the importance of working with families, very few states require extensive course work or inservice training in working with families. Few teacher preparation programs address techniques for communicating with families and many teachers and other school staff members may simply not know how to go about involving parents more in their children's learning (U.S.Department of Education, 1994a). Schools and school systems seldom offer any formal training in collaborating with parents. However, both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers are working to make such information and skills widely available. Teacher training programs can include general information on the benefits of and barriers to parental involvement, techniques for improving open communication between home and school, and information on ways to involve parents in helping their children learn in school and outside of school. Individual schools can provide training to current school staff, teacher training programs can expand the range of courses taught and required, and states can change the requirements for teaching certification (U.S. Department of Education, 1994b).

In working with the families of the targeted first grade students, teachers gain insights into their students' home lives and parents become more supportive of the

school and more involved in their children's schoolwork. Parents respect school personnel who also respect them. Being able to share their own perceptions concerning their children is very vital to parents. Creating a positive atmosphere in school relations is an important factor in the success a parent involvement programs (Lindle, 1989).

Society must share in the responsibility for raising all children. This means parent, family and community involvement. Family and community involvement are a critical part of the solution to America's education problems (Revenaugh, 1992). Active participation and shared responsibility demonstrate a true commitment to education. Participants must feel that they have a vested interest in the school and the educational process occurring within it. As a support system, the community-at-large provides a wealth of resources upon which the school can draw. Each time these resources are utilized and positive results occur, additional resources become available. Consequently, the community and the school are drawn closer together. Educational partnerships give the private sector the opportunity to demonstrate concern for the community's well-being and boost its public image. Businesses also benefit, gaining a work force that is better educated and prepared to meet its needs. Good schools help keep communities healthy. Businesses flourish in healthy communities, and healthy communities attract new businesses (Rich, 1987).

In order for students to succeed in school and in life, they must be fully prepared to enter the real world that surrounds them. For that to happen, the real world must be brought to them while they are in school through continual and meaningful involvement from parents and community volunteers. Administrators and other staff members must work to develop and maintain meaningful partnerships and relationships with parents and community volunteers. A welcoming atmosphere should be established for parents and community volunteers, and the school should

work hard to involve every segment of the community (Austin Independent School District, 1996).

What every community needs is a concerted effort to encourage greater awareness of the total community's role in the education of children. This effort has four purposes: to involve the media in increasing public understanding of the family's critically important role in children's education; to give parents practical suggestions for what they can do to help children learn; to involve businesses in an active partnerships; and to ensure that other populations beyond parents are integrated into the community education process (Rich, 1987). Business and industry should help the schools develop a powerful relationship with parents. Businesses can utilize workplace policies that encourage parents to get involved in their children's education. Businesses must put parental involvement as a high priority and review their role in education (Mannan and Blackwell, 1992).

The urgency and importance of empowering parents becomes greater every day. This country's demographics are rapidly changing. A larger percentage of school-age children is coming from poor and minority homes than ever before. In the nation as a whole, one child out of four lives in poverty. Sixty percent of the children starting school today will have lived in a single-parent home by the time they finish high school, if they finish high school (Gandara, 1989).

Researchers indicate that the American family of today does not look anything like the American family of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1979, 16% of children in the United States lived below the poverty level, with an increase to 20% by 1988. By 1991, 27% of all births were to unwed mothers. The rate of non-marital births to adolescent mothers has more than doubled to 64% over the past 25 years. Adolescent mothers also have higher poverty rates, lower motivation and expectations, and inadequate schooling. Almost 44% of grandmothers across all ethnic groups in the

United States provide care for at least one grandchild (Karp, 1993). By the 1970s, the typical nuclear family had changed to include the one-parent family, the step-family and the childless family. One-parent families in the past were usually the result of the death of a spouse. Now, most one-parent families are the result of divorce or are created when unmarried mothers have children. In 1991, more than one out of four children lived with only one parent, usually the mother (Encarta Encyclopedia, 1997).

Many families, including privileged ones, can provide only uneven support for their children's school experience. Real or perceived economic pressures weigh on most households. Most parents feel compelled to work long hours, or more than one job, simply to keep family finances on track or to provide the standard of living that Americans have come to expect. Dual-career families and single-parent families have little time or energy to spend working as partners in their children's education, making school visits, attending conferences or providing extracurricular activities for their children (Rich, 1987).

The American family may look different, but parents continue to care about their children. Parents' involvement in education can help compensate for the lack of other family resources. The targeted school has very little control over the changing American family, but being aware of these demographics is vital to preparing a meaningful and productive parental involvement program.

The parents of the targeted elementary first grade classes are afforded an opportunity to attend a Parent Information Night scheduled for the beginning of the current school year. This meeting is designed to clarify expectations for parents regarding their role in their child's education. Parents receive current information concerning curriculum, upcoming activities and their opportunities for involvement. Parents are encouraged to take an active role during this meeting.

The implementation of the assignment notebooks for the targeted first grade

students not only gives parents a current schedule of important events and a daily agenda, but also allows them the opportunity for direct communication with the school on a daily basis. Students are asked to be responsible for transporting these notebooks and parents are expected to sign them daily.

The parents of the targeted first grade students are asked to participate in a program in which they share their expertise in their chosen profession or area of interest. The implementation of a flexible schedule should accommodate all parents who wish to participate. This concept of involving community members is further enhanced through the "Community Readers Program". Members of the community are invited to share a favorite piece of literature with the students in the targeted classes , and share the importance of reading as a life-long skill by relating it to their professional life. The students have the opportunity to ask pertinent questions of the community visitors.

Project Objectives and Processes

Objective I

As a result of planning and implementing special school activities during the period from October 1998 through January 1999, the first grade students from the targeted school will develop a more positive attitude toward school as measured by teacher observation and students surveys.

Processes to be used to implement this objective include the following:

1. Schedule family nights.
2. Develop special projects to be completed at home as a family.
3. Implement surveys to reflect student attitudes.

Objective II

As a result of clarifying the expectations involved in using the school's assignment notebooks during the period of October 1998 through January 1999, the first grade students from the targeted school will demonstrate improved responsibility as measured by the teacher-made checklist for assignment notebooks.

Processes to be used to implement this objective include the following:

1. Host a Parent Information Night.
2. Distribute teachers-made handouts explaining the assignment notebook procedures and responsibilities.
3. Maintain regular contacts with parents.

Objective III

As a result of involving parents and other community members in an active partnership role within the classroom during the period of October 1998 through January 1999, the first grade students from the targeted school will gain an awareness of their community and its role in their education, as measured by the participation of parents and others as community members.

Processes to be used to implement this objective include the following:

1. Invite parents to share their expertise in their chosen profession or areas of interest .
2. Implement a "Community Reader" program.
3. Provide background information and questioning strategies for classroom visitors.

Project Action Plan

This action plan is designed to increase parental involvement in the targeted first grade classrooms. By implementing the activities of this action plan, parents will be given more opportunities to become active participants in their child's education. The three major objectives of this plan are: an improvement in student responsibility, a more positive attitude toward school for both students and parents, and an awareness of community and its role in education.

I. Project Preparations (prior to Implementation)

A. Discuss Action Plan with Principal

1. scheduling of special events
2. survey distributions
3. staff communications

B. Develop surveys

1. staff
2. parents
3. students

C. Develop checklists

1. assignment notebooks
2. family activity attendance
3. take-home assignments

D. Prepare materials / handouts for Parent Information Night

E. Develop activities / materials for First Grade Math-Reading Family Night

F. Develop take-home activity projects

G. Coordinate "Community Readers"

H. Construct needed materials for parent visits

I. Prepare "Welcome" letters for parents

J. Design surveys / questionnaires for follow-up from Family Night

II. Action Plan Calendar

A. Week 1 - August 17 - 21

1. distribute parent surveys at registration--compile results (Appendix A)

B. Week 2 - August 24 - 28

1. distribute staff survey--compile results (Appendix B)
2. conduct student survey in targeted classrooms (Appendix C)
3. send home request for materials for Open House projects (Appendix D)

C. Week 3 - August 31 - September 4

1. write and send home personal invitations to parents for Information Night / Open House (Appendix E)
2. assemble Open House projects
3. utilize Take-Home Activity checklist (Appendix F)

D. Week 4 - September 7 - 11

1. display Open House projects for parental viewing
2. Parent Information Night / Open House (9/10)
3. utilize Family Attendance checklist (Appendix G)
4. begin using assignment notebooks

E. Week 5 - September 14 - 18

1. utilize Assignment Notebook checklist (Appendix H)
2. send home follow-up parental letter about Open House (Appendix I)

F. Week 6 - September 21 - 25

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. develop personal invitations for Fall Family Get Together

G. Week 7 - September 28 - October 2

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. send home personal invitation to Fall Family Get Together (Appendix J)
3. Fall Family Get Together (10/3)

H. Week 8 - October 5 - 9

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. use Family Attendance checklist
3. send home personal thank yous for Fall Family Get Together (Appendix K)

I. Week 9 - October 12 - 16

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. send home family invitation to Halloween Parade (Appendix L)

3. use Family Attendance checklist for parade participation

J. Week 10 - October 19 -23

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. write thank yous to all who participated in Halloween Parade (Appendix M)
3. send home reminders about Carnival (Appendix N)
4. design and assemble Take Home Activity #1 to coordinate with Fire Safety Week
5. school Carnival (10/24)
6. use Family Activities checklist for Carnival participation

K. Week 11 - October 26 - 30

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. send home Take Home Activity #1 (Appendix O)
3. send thank yous to those who attended/helped at the Carnival (Appendix P)

L. Week 12 - November 2 - 6

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. Parent-Teacher Conferences
3. use Take Home Activity checklist
4. share oral portion of Take Home Activity (safety rules)
5. display Take Home Activity #! with comment sheet
6. utilize Family Attendance checklist for conferences

M. Week 13 - November 9 - 13

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. send home thank yous to parents who attended conferences (Appendix Q)

N. Week 14 - November 16 - 20

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. send home reminders about Ice Cream Social/Cake Auction (Appendix R)
3. Ice Cream Social/Cake Auction (11/17)
4. write and send invitations to Visitation Day (Appendix S)
5. American Education Week-Visitation Day (11/19)
5. send thank yous to those who attended Visitation Day (Appendix T)
6. send thank yous to those who attended Ice Cream Social/Cake Auction (Appendix U)
7. use Family Attendance checklist (2 events)

O. Week 15 - November 23 - 27

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. develop and send home Take Home Activity #2 (Appendix V)

P. Week 16 - November 30 - December 4

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. display Take Home Activity #2 on outside bulletin board, rewarding those who have learned accompanying poem
3. display comment sheet
4. use Take Home Activity checklist

Q. Week 17 - December 7 -11

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. write personal invitations to families for Christmas Programs - Grandparents (AM) / Parents (PM) (Appendix W)

R. Week 18 - December 14 - 18

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. Christmas Programs
3. use Family Attendance checklist

S. Week 19 - January 4 - 8

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. develop agenda for First Grade Family Reading/Math Night
3. write and send home explanation letter concerning "All About You" project, including invitation for parents' participation (Appendix X)
4. begin scheduling students/parents for "All About Me"

T. Week 20 - January 11 - 15

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. write and send home first invitation and explanation for First Grade Family Reading/Math Night (Appendix Y)
3. begin "All About Me" Student of the Week
3. write and send home invitations to parents for Staff Chili Supper (Appendix Z)

U. Week 21 - January 18 - 22

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. use Family Attendance checklist for Chili Supper
3. Chili Supper (1/21)
4. send home reminder #2 for Family Night (Appendix AA)

V. Week 22 - January 25 - 29

1. use Assignment Notebook checklist
2. send home final reminder for Family Night (Appendix BB)

3. First Grade Family Reading/Math Night (1/25)
4. use Family Attendance checklist
5. send thank yous to those who attended Family Night (Appendix CC)
6. develop and send home a follow-up parental survey (Appendix DD)
7. develop and administer follow-up student survey (Appendix EE)

Methods of Assessment

There are three major methods of assessment that will be used to measure the effects of the proposed Action Plan. These methods include checklists, surveys, and teacher observations documented in anecdotal records. These methods will be ongoing throughout the implementation of the Action Plan.

The teacher-made checklists were designed to record involvement opportunities for the parents of the targeted first grade classes. One checklist is utilized to monitor the use of the assignment notebooks. Each parent is expected to sign these notebooks daily and the checklist will show the percentage of parent participation for this process. Another checklist is designed to record family attendance at specific school functions. The third checklist reflects the percentage of participation from the targeted families in specifically assigned take-home projects.

Three types of surveys have been created to be used as another tool of assessment. A parent survey was distributed during Fall Registration and another one will be given to the same parents at the end of the implemented Action Plan. There will

be other opportunities for parents to express opinions and comments on what is taking place throughout the proposed plan. A specific survey will be given to the entire staff of targeted school. This survey will reflect the current attitudes of the faculty towards parental involvement. The targeted first grade students will have an opportunity to participate using as specifically designed survey. This survey will be administered at the beginning and the end of the proposed Action Plan.

Throughout the implementation of the proposed Action Plan the researchers will maintain on-going anecdotal records supported by teacher observations. Through these observations, determinations will be made in regards to the effects of this Action Plan on parental involvement in the targeted elementary school.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The primary objective of this Action Plan was to increase parental involvement in the targeted first grade classrooms. Parents were given more opportunities to become active participants in their child's education. This plan was designed to improve student responsibility, to create a more positive attitude toward school for both students and parents, and to develop an awareness of their community and its role in education. Implementation strategies included the planning and arranging of special school activities designed to develop a more positive attitude toward school, the clarifying of expectations involved in using the school's assignment notebooks in order to improve student responsibility, and organizing an active partnership involving parents and community members to gain an awareness of the community's role in education.

The Action Plan was placed in effect beginning August 1998 during the week preceding the opening of the 1998 - 1999 school year. Surveys were developed and distributed to parents of the targeted first grade classes at fall registration. During the first week of school, the targeted first graders were asked to complete a survey reflecting their attitudes about school. The entire staff was asked to complete a survey concerning their perceptions about parent involvement at the targeted school. Results were compiled from the three individual surveys.

Throughout the implementation period, personal invitations were written and

sent home for each scheduled family event held at the targeted school, to encourage family attendance. These events included Open House / Information Night, Family Fall Get-Together, Dad's Club Halloween Parade, Carnival, Ice Cream Social and Cake Auction, Visitation Day during American Education Week, Christmas Program, Staff Chili Supper, and the First Grade Family Reading and Math Night. Following each event, a thank you note was sent home in appreciation of the familys' involvement. A teacher-made checklist was implemented at the conclusion of each event, recording family attendance and participation.

At the beginning of the school year, each student receives an assignment notebook. As part of this Action Plan, parents were asked to sign this assignment notebook daily on an enclosed weekly schedule sheet. The targeted first grade students were responsible for seeing that this task was accomplished. Each week signatures were checked and recorded on the teacher-made checklist for assignment notebooks.

The targeted school held its annual Open House / Information Night in early September. As the first family-involvement project of the Action Plan, the first grade students were asked to bring various photographs of themselves and their family to be assembled into a personal poster for display at Open House. This project was designed to encourage parental involvement both in the gathering of the needed materials from home and in the viewing of the completed project during Open House.

During the implementation of this Action Plan, two Take-Home Activities were developed and sent home to be completed by the targeted first grade students with the help of their parents. The first project was designed to supplement the Fire Safety Unit taught in the targeted first grade classrooms. Each child was given the materials to construct a Dalmatian fire safety puppet. They were also asked to write three fire safety rules to share with the class, and display with their puppets. The completed puppets

and safety rules were displayed outside the first grade classrooms along with as comment sheet. Parents, visitors, and staff were invited to view the completed projects and comment on them. For the second Take-Home Activity, the first grade students were given a blank pair of construction paper mittens that they were asked to decorate any way they wished. They were encouraged to work with their parents to complete the project. They were also asked to memorize a poem about mittens to recite in front of the class. The decorated mittens were displayed on the bulletin boards outside the first grade classrooms. Parents and others were asked to comment about the projects on an attached sheet.

As a culminating activity, a Family Reading and Math Night was designed for the targeted first grade students and their parents. Six stations were set up in the gym, including three reading and three math utilizing independent activities. Parents were encouraged to participate in these activities with their child. The activities included reading stories together, making take home items, and playing various math games together. Parents and children were encouraged to participate in as many stations as possible. There was a table of recycled books donated by one of the second grade classes at the targeted school, and each child was able to choose a book to take home. Each participating first grader received a new book, Clifford's First Snow Day. Refreshments were served, and all the mini-projects and giveaways were taken home by the participating families.

At the conclusion of this Action Plan, both parents and students from the targeted first grade were asked to complete a survey. These surveys were developed to reflect the opinions of those participating in the activities of the Action Plan.

During the implementation of the Action Plan, certain modifications had to be made in regards to Objective III. Initially the process called for the incorporation of a Community Readers program for the targeted first grade classrooms. Due to time

constraints and scheduling difficulties, this program was replaced by an "All About Me" weekly activity which involved the individual students and their parents. Each week a different student from the two targeted first grade classrooms was chosen as the subject for the "All About Me" bulletin board. A request was sent home for photographs and personal items that the student wished to share with the class. Parents were asked to help their first grader complete an interview sheet which was then shared with the class. Parents were also invited to come to school during their child's special week and speak with the class. The class was encouraged to use their questioning strategies, which had been previously taught, when interviewing the classroom visitors. Another program used to supplement Objective III was the participation in the Junior Achievement Program, entitled "Our Family". Each week, for a five week period, a member of the community presented lessons developed by Junior Achievement to the targeted first grade classes. These were the only deviations from the original Action Plan.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Two objective methods of assessment were used to measure the effects of the Action Plan. One of these methods was the implementation of teacher-made checklists to record parental participation for assignment notebooks, family attendance at specified school events, and participation in the take-home activities.

Table 3 presents the results of parent participation in the use of assignment notebooks.

Table 3

Assignment Notebook Participation Results

	Week 1-5	Week 6-10	Week 11-15
Classroom A	92.8 %	92.8 %	88.8 %
Classroom B	96.2 %	88.4 %	88.0 %
Total	94.5 %	90.7 %	88.4 %

This table shows the percentage of parent participation for the use of the assignments notebooks. Each child was given an assignment notebook and was directed to take them home daily. Each week an agenda was placed in the student's assignment notebook, highlighting the events of the week. Every parent was expected to sign this notebook daily. The figures reflect the parents' participation in the objective. Table 3 reflects a decline in parent participation in this activity, although the percentages remain high.

Throughout the Action Plan various family-oriented events took place. Family participation was noted through the use of a teacher-made family attendance checklist. The results are indicated on Table 4.

Table 4

Family Activities Participation Results

Event	Family Participation Results
Open House / Information Night	83 %
Fall Family Get-Together	26 %
Dad's Club Halloween Parade	30 %
Carnival	59 %
Ice Cream Social / Cake Auction	33 %
Parent Visitation Day	56 %
Staff Chili Supper	27 %
First Grade Family Reading and Math Night	41 %

Of particular note is the wide range of percentages of family participation for the specific events. It should also be noted that no participation percentage dropped below 25%, showing that at least one quarter of the targeted population of first grade families was always in attendance.

Another major method of assessment was the utilization of surveys. Initially surveys were administered to the faculty of the targeted school, to the parents of the targeted first grade classes, and to the targeted first graders. The staff was surveyed prior to the implementation of the Action Plan. The parents and the students of the targeted first grade were surveyed prior to the implementation of the Action Plan and at its conclusion.

The staff of the targeted school was asked to complete a survey questioning their views on parental involvement in education. Every member of the faculty

completed a survey. Results indicated that 100% of the staff surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that parental involvement influences student behavior in a positive manner, and parents who are actively involved in their child's education have higher achieving students. The staff also felt very strongly that parents of the targeted school were kept very well informed about what is happening at this school, Ninety-five percent of the staff agreed that parents are offered adequate opportunities to become involved in school activities, while 5% felt more opportunities needed to be offered. The largest discrepancy found was between agreement and disagreement about the decline of parental involvement over the last five years. Seventy percent agreed that there had been a decline while 25% felt that no decline was and evident and one staff member had no opinion on this subject.

The initial survey for parents was offered at Fall Registration before the opening of school. Twenty-nine families out of a possible 55 chose to complete this survey. A similar survey was sent home to each family of the targeted first grade classes at the conclusion of the Action Plan, and 47 families completed this survey. Four items were repeated on both surveys to be used for comparison. Parents were asked how often they talked to their child about what was happening at school. On the initial survey, 90% talked with their child on a daily basis. On the follow-up survey, 79% discussed school daily with their child. Parents were asked how often they read with their child at home. Fifty-nine percent responded that they did so on a daily basis on the initial survey. Fifty-seven percent responded similarly on the final survey. Parents responded on the initial survey that 93% felt satisfied to very satisfied with their opportunities for involvement in activities at this school, while 89% felt satisfied to very satisfied on the follow-up survey. On the initial survey, 86% of parents responded positively when asked if they were adequately informed about what is happening at school, On the survey following the implementation of the Action Plan, 92% of the parents responded

positively to this question.

The targeted first grade students were surveyed before the implementation of the Action Plan and at the conclusion of the Plan, using the same survey. Table 5 highlights these results.

Table 5

Student Survey Results

Inquiries	Initial Survey		Post Survey	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Talk to parents about school	81%	19%	82%	18%
Read at home with parents	77%	23%	96%	4%
Want parents involved at school	85%	15%	92%	8%

Of particular note is the upward trend of the percentages toward a more positive response from the targeted first graders on all items following the implementation of the Action Plan.

On the post-survey, the targeted first grade students were also given the opportunity to evaluate specific activities implemented during the Action Plan.

Table 6

Student Responses to Specific Activities

Activity	Positive	Negative	Didn't Participate
Fire Safety Puppets (Take-Home #1)	86.2%	5.8%	7.8%
Mittens (Take-Home #2)	92.1%	7.8%	0%
Family Reading and Math Night	41.1%	0%	58.8%
Junior Achievement	78.4%	17.6%	3.9%
Parent Visitors	90.1%	9.8%	0%

It should be noted that although only 41% of the families participated in the First Grade Family Reading and Math Night, 100% of those that did participate responded favorably toward the activity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon the presentation and analysis of the data complied during the implementation of the Action Plan, several conclusions concerning parental involvement can be drawn. Although the implementation of the Action Plan could not guarantee a change in the amount of parental involvement from the families of the targeted first grade classes, the results have exhibited that certain steps can be taken to show a significant increase in parental involvement.

Numerous and varied opportunities must be offered in order to meet the needs of as many families as possible. These activities must be shown to be of significant merit, so that the parents feel their time is well-spent. The activities must be well-planned and executed. One parent commented following the First Grade Family Reading and Math Night that the hands-on activities for the kids and parents were perfect : Thank you for having us! Another stated that it made their first grader feel special to spend prime time with Mom. An added benefit of well planned activities was

pointed out by a parent who stated that it was nice to spend so structured a time with her daughter. It helped her to understand what her daughter needs more help with.

Realistic expectations are essential. Even though parents cannot always attend special activities, it does not mean that they don't wish to be involved. One parent expressed that idea that it is hard to be involved in school activities when working full time, but, with enough notice, would like the opportunity to participate as often as possible. On the follow-up survey for parents, a majority from the targeted first grade classes requested more opportunities to attend special school activities with their child.

Goals for parental involvement must also be realistic. Expectations need to be stated clearly and concisely, and must be attainable for all. These expectations were stated initially at the Parent Information Night / Open House held early in the fall where 85% of the targeted families were represented. The expectations were continually reinforced through the implementation of the project. The use of assignment notebooks gave constant opportunities for both parents and teachers to communicate with each other about what was happening within the targeted classrooms. One parent stated that he was very impressed with the daily contact between teachers and parents. Another parent expressed the opinion that the use of the notebooks was an excellent idea and it gave opportunities for frequent communication.

Creating a sense of ownership is essential for a true partnership between parents and the school. Parents must be given continual opportunities to voice their opinions and comment upon what is happening with their child's education. They must be kept aware of opportunities for them to become actively involved. Consistent and frequent communication is fundamental to creating a mutually beneficial partnership. During the implementation of the Action Plan, steps were taken to assure that all caregivers from the targeted first grade classrooms were kept informed about events

and projects. Four families within the targeted population speak Spanish as their primary language. By having the letters and notes translated and sent to them in their native language, they were not only made to feel more a part of the program, but they were also able to comment freely and communicate their opinions. One Spanish speaking parent stated how happy he was with his daughter's first grade class and was pleased with his daughter's progress and thanked everyone who had helped so much. Another father stated that he was satisfied with the system of education that his daughter is receiving.

Establishing a positive and accessible atmosphere with the targeted classroom was important in promoting a partnership between school and home. Parents need to be made to feel welcome and sincerely appreciated as valuable members of the educational team. One parent stated that her family has enjoyed the targeted school very much and that the whole schools feels like a family. A parent who recently transferred her children to the targeted school expressed the opinion that it is a wonderful school and her children have learned a lot. Another new family said that the targeted school is a very good place to learn and that the teachers are wonderful and make class time fun as well as educational. Once a positive atmosphere is established, parental involvement will grow, and students, parents and teachers will all benefit.

In order to increase and strengthen parental involvement in the educational setting, the efforts must remain on-going and relevant for all those concerned. There must be clear and concise expectations and goals, and the lines of communication between all members of the partnership must be open and direct. Providing constant reinforcement and monitoring of all activities is most important. The impact of the Action Plan has been felt only toward the targeted first grade classrooms and their families. In order for such a plan to be most effective, it should be implemented

throughout the entire school population. The Action Plan will not reach its full potential if it is only initiated at a single grade level. Parents want what is best for their children and will welcome occasions to become more actively involved when presented with meaningful opportunities. A truly committed effort made by teachers will not go unnoticed by parents. As one parent commented on the follow-up survey, "I believe we've done more in first grade this year than in any year before. This is my third child at this school, and I have really enjoyed being more a part of his education."

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Appendix A

Initial Parent Survey

PARENT SURVEY NAME _____
(optional)

1. HOW OFTEN DO YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING AT SCHOOL?

1	2	3	4	5
Seldom		Occasionally		Daily

2. HOW OFTEN DO YOU AND YOUR CHILD READ TOGETHER AT HOME?

1	2	3	4	5
Seldom		Occasionally		Daily

3. HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR OWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?

1	2	3	4	5
Rather Negative				Very Positive

4. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACTIVITIES AT THIS SCHOOL?

1	2	3	4	5
Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied

5. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE WELCOME YOU RECEIVED AT THIS SCHOOL?

1	2	3	4	5
Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied

6. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU SPEND MORE TIME INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION THAN YOUR PARENTS SPENT INVOLVED IN YOUR EDUCATION?

_____ YES _____ NO

7. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE ADEQUATELY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THIS SCHOOL?

_____ YES _____ NO

COMMENTS: _____

_____

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY!!!!!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B

Staff Survey

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION -- STAFF SURVEY

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
1. Parental Involvement influences student behavior in a positive manner. COMMENTS:					
2. There has been a decline in parents' involvement with their child's education throughout the past five years. COMMENTS:					
3. Parents are offered adequate opportunities to become involved in school activities. COMMENTS:					
4. Parents who are actively involved in their child's education have higher achieving students. COMMENTS:					
5. Parents are kept very well informed about what is happening at school. COMMENTS:					

THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME !!!!!!

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Appendix C

Initial Student Survey

STUDENT SURVEY

NAME _____

1. DO YOU TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL? YES NO

2. DO YOU AND YOUR PARENTS READ TOGETHER AT HOME? YES NO

3. WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR PARENTS TO SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING AT SCHOOL? YES NO

4. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT FIRST GRADE?

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Appendix D

Open House Project - Materials Request

DEAR PARENTS,

WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO PUT TOGETHER A SPECIAL PROJECT FOR OUR OPEN HOUSE NEXT WEEK, AND WE'RE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP. WOULD YOU PLEASE SEND THE FOLLOWING PHOTOGRAPHS WITH YOUR FIRST GRADER BY NEXT TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th?

1. A BABY PICTURE OF YOUR FIRST GRADER
2. 2 - 3 PICTURES OF YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS
3. PICTURES OF ANY PETS THAT YOU MAY HAVE

ALL PHOTOS WILL BE MOUNTED ON A 14" X 22" POSTER FOR DISPLAY. WE PROMISE TO TAKE VERY GOOD CARE OF YOUR PICTURES AND WE'LL RETURN THEM RIGHT AFTER OPEN HOUSE.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR HELP.

SINCERELY,

Laura Klaus

and

Carol Mundrup

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Appendix E

Invitation to Open House / Information Night

Dear 1st Grade Parents.

You are cordially invited to attend our Franklin Open House and Parent Information Night. This exciting event will be held at 6:30 on Thursday September 10th in the Franklin School gym.

A brief presentation will be given by our Franklin P.T.A. and Mr. Shannon. You will then be invited back to your child's classroom for two 30 minute sessions. The session will begin with a 20 minute talk given by your child's teacher and enough time will be given for your child to show you around their classroom!

When your 30 minute session is over, feel free to browse and buy at the Scholastic Book Fair held in our school gym. The crowd could be heavy, but don't fret- you may send money with your child on Friday to purchase books.

Please attend our Open House and Parent Information Night. You will get to know your child's teacher, get a glimpse of what your child does during the day, get important information about 1st grade, meet some of your child's new friends, and have some family time! We look forward to meeting you on Thursday night!

Sincerely,

Carol Mendoza

Lana Weiss

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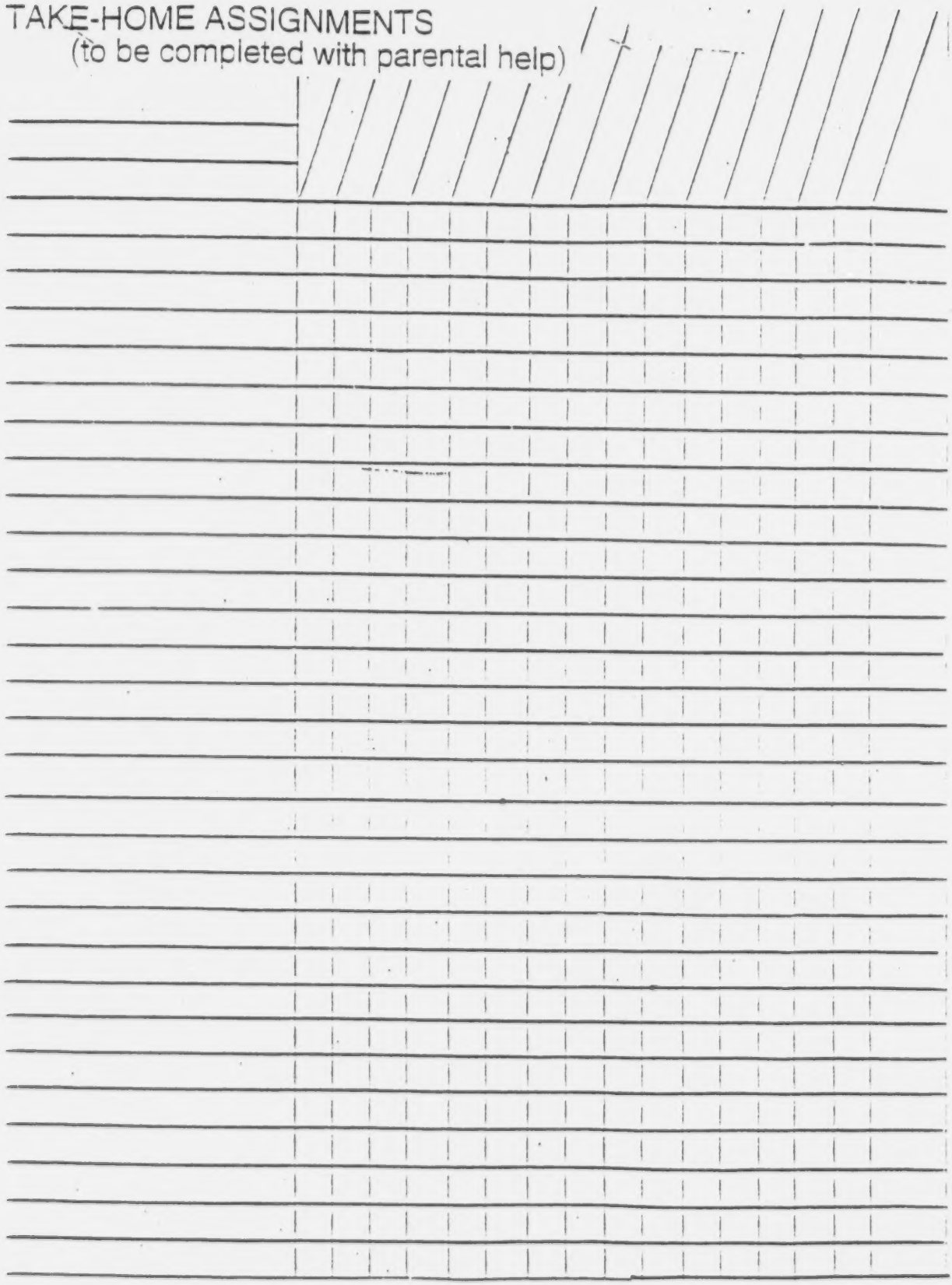
Appendix F

Take Home Activities Checklist

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS
(to be completed with parental help)



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Appendix G

Family Attendance Checklist

FAMILY ATTENDANCE CHECKLIST

	Information Night	Open House	Reading and Math Night	Family School Picnic	Carnival	Halloween Parade	P/T Conferences	Christmas Program	Chili Supper	Ice Cream Social	American Ed. Week Visitation Day			

Appendix H

Assignment Notebook Checklist

ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK CHECKLIST

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9	WEEK 10	WEEK 11	WEEK 12	WEEK 13	WEEK 14	WEEK 15

Appendix I

Follow-up Letter Concerning Open House / Information Night

DEAR PARENTS,

HERE IS THE ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK THAT WE TALKED ABOUT LAST NIGHT AT OPEN HOUSE. YOU WILL FIND OUR FIRST SCHEDULE (FOR THIS WEEK) STAPLED ON THE APPROPRIATE WEEK. PLEASE SIGN THE FRIDAY SQUARE AND HAVE YOUR FIRST GRADERS RETURN IT, ALONG WITH THEIR PURPLE FOLDER, ON MONDAY. FROM NOW ON, EACH MONDAY YOU WILL FIND A NEW SCHEDULE STAPLED INTO THE ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK. PLEASE BE SURE TO SIGN IT EACH DAY AND REMIND YOUR FIRST GRADER TO BRING IT TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY. THIS HELPS ME TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN THE FOLDER, NOTEBOOK AND CONTENTS. EVERY CHILD WHO FAITHFULLY BRINGS THESE TWO ITEMS BACK AND FORTH EACH DAY, AND HAS WONDERFUL PARENTS WHO FAITHFULLY SIGN EACH NIGHT, WILL QUALIFY FOR THE END-OF-YEAR PARTY...AND ITS ALWAYS A GREAT TIME!!!

I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR MAKING THIS A SUCCESSFUL AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO KEEP COMMUNICATIONS OPEN BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL. THIS WILL ALSO PREPARE THE KIDS FOR THE UPPER GRADES. WHEN THEY BECOME SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ASSIGNMENTS.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO USE THE "FREE WRITING" SIDE OF THE ASSIGNMENT BOOK FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR INFORMATION YOU'D LIKE ME TO HAVE.

HERE'S TO 100% PARTICIPATION AND A GREAT END-OF-YEAR PARTY!!!

THANK YOU!!!

Carol Mindrup

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DEAR PARENTS,

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU FOR THE GREAT TURNOUT WE HAD LAST NIGHT AT OPEN HOUSE!! I REALLY ENJOYED SEEING ALL OF YOU, AND I APOLOGIZE TO ANY OF YOU THAT I WASN'T ABLE TO TALK TO INDIVIDUALLY. PLEASE REMEMBER TO FEEL FREE TO CALL IF YOU EVER HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.

I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT YEAR...AND WE'RE OFF TO A GREAT START.

IF YOU WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND LAST NIGHT, I AM SENDING HOME THE INFORMATIONAL PACKET WITH YOUR FIRST GRADER TODAY. PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO LOOK IT OVER. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, JUST LET ME KNOW.

AGAIN, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COME LAST NIGHT. IT MEANT A LOT TO ME AND A LOT TO YOUR FIRST GRADER. BY WORKING TOGETHER, WE'LL HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

Carol Mendrup

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Appendix J

Invitation to Fall Family Get Together

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On Saturday, October 3rd from 4:00-7:00 at Franklin School, we will have our 2nd Annual Fall Get Together. There will be games for the kids, a dunk tank and lots of time to socialize with other Franklin families. Primary (K-3) are asked to bring a dish to pass. P.T.A. will provide hot dogs, pop, and table service! You might want to bring your lawn chairs to sit and relax for a change!!

This would be a wonderful opportunity to meet some of your children's friends and meet some of the fun loving families at Franklin School. We hope to see you on Saturday!!!!!

Carol Mindrup
Laura Wells

*Keep your fingers crossed for decent weather!

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Appendix K

Thank You for Fall Family Get Together

Dear Parents and Grandparents,

Thank you for braving the elements and attending our Family Fall Get Together. Despite the rain, we still had a pretty good turn out. A big thank you to our cooks who had to cook the hot dogs in the rain. The kids didn't seem to mind having the dunk tank canceled since we all got wet anyway! We hope you had an opportunity to visit with some of the other wonderful Franklin families. The weather didn't seem to damper anyone spirits!

Thanks again for coming,

Carol Mindrup
Laura Wells

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Appendix L

Invitation to Halloween Parade

JUST A REMINDER ----

THE HALLOWEEN PARADE IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18TH BEGINNING AT 2:00PM, AND YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ARE INVITED TO JOIN US IN SUPPORT OF FRANKLIN SCHOOL. PLEASE MEET BETWEEN 1:30 AND 2:00 IN THE FIELD NEAR THE NEW TPC STORE AT THE CORNER OF 53RD STREET AND 23RD AVENUE. WE'LL BE WALKING BEHIND OUR FRANKLIN FLOAT (THANKS, DAD'S CLUB!!). FOR A QUARTER YOU CAN RIDE THE FRANKLIN BUS BACK TO THE START OF THE PARADE.

AND REMEMBER...ALL FRANKLIN STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE PARADE WILL BE INVITED TO AN AFTER-SCHOOL PIZZA PARTY ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22ND RIGHT AFTER SCHOOL UNTIL 3:30.

COME AND JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF

FRANKLIN FAMILY FUN!!!!

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Do you and your family have plans for Sunday afternoon? Why not join us for the Annual Dad's Club Halloween Parade!! The Franklin Dad's Club has made an enormous float for the parade this year. We will be meeting behind the TPC store at 1:30. Please dress in Halloween costumes or show your Franklin Spirit. If your child participates in this event they will be rewarded with a pizza party on Thursday, October 22nd. The after school pizza party will be held in the gym from school dismissal to 3:30.

Join us for some Franklin family fun on Sunday. we hope to see you there!!!

Laura Wells

Carol Mindrup

Appendix M

Thank You for Halloween Parade Participation

THANK YOU!!!

Thank you for coming out on such a chilly Sunday afternoon and participating in the Dad's Club Halloween Parade. If you hadn't heard. Franklin won 1st place for their float. It was huge!! Way to go Dad's Club!! Franklin also had the largest number of families participating in the parade!! Way to go Franklin Families!! I was impressed with the 1st grade turn out. The students who participated are anxious for the pizza party that will be held afterschool on Thursday. Be looking for the next Franklin School family event on this coming Saturday---- CARNIVAL!!!!!

Thanks again for participating.

Carol Mindrup
Laura Wells

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Appendix N

Carnival Reminder

DON'T FORGET ! ! ! !

THIS SATURDAY IS OUR ANNUAL FRANKLIN SCHOOL CARNIVAL, BEGINNING AT 4:00PM. COME OUT AND SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL! FOOD, GAMES, PRIZES AND FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!!

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Appendix O

Take Home Activity #1

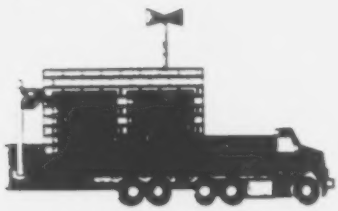
FIRST GRADE TAKE HOME ACTIVITY
OCTOBER 1998

Dear Parents,

As a culminating activity to our study of Fire Safety during Fire Prevention Month (October), we are asking that you help your child make a Dalmatian Puppy sack puppet and help them to come up with three fire safety rules that your child and his "puppy" can share with the class. We have showed an example of the completed puppet to the students, and have enclosed all the necessary materials. We have spent a lot of time in class discussing fire safety, so your child shouldn't have trouble coming up with three rules.

We're asking that all projects be returned to school by Monday, November 2, so that we can share our rules and display our puppets. Please feel free to make comments about our display when you're here at conference time.

Thank you for your help, and we hope this project stimulates some good discussion at your house about fire safety.



Sincerely,
Laura Wells and Carol Mindrup

Appendix P

Thank You for Carnival Participation

THANK YOU THANK YOU

Dear Franklin Families.

We hope you had a great time at our School Carnival. P.T.A. did a wonderful job as they usually do. It was great to see all the parents helping out!! It was a busy weekend in our community and lots of other things to choose from. Thanks again for bringing your family to this fun family event!

Sincerely.
Laura Wells and Carol Mindrup

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Appendix Q

Parent - Teacher Conference Thank You

Dear Parents and Grandparents,

Thank you for taking part of your day or evening to come to your child's conference. It was nice to get to talk to you about your 1st grader. We had 100% participation!! By working together we should have a successful school year. Please contact us at school or at home if you have any concerns about your child's education.

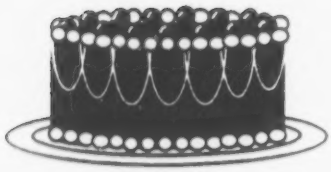
Sincerely,

Carol Mindrup

Laura Wells

Appendix R

Reminder for Ice Cream Social / Cake Auction



DON'T FORGET !!!
TONIGHT'S OUR FIRST ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND CAKE AUCTION

THE ICE CREAM SOCIAL BEGINS AT 6:00 IN THE GYM, FOLLOWED BY THE CAKE AUCTION
(I TOOK A SNEAK PEEK, AND THERE ARE SOME GORGEOUS CAKES FOR AUCTION !)

WE HOPE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO COME AND HAVE DESSERT WITH US TONIGHT... AND MAYBE TAKE A CAKE HOME WITH YOU.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Appendix S

Invitations to Visitation Day - American Education Week

Dear Parents,

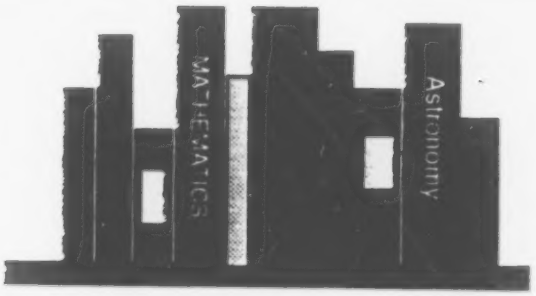
This Thursday has been designated as Visitation Day here at Franklin to celebrate American Education Week. You are invited to come and visit our class anytime during the day. Please feel free to drop by, if only for a few minutes. I wanted to give you an idea of our schedule for Thursday (if you promise not to be shocked if we're not right on schedule!)

8:20 - 8:45 Opening
8:45 - 10:00 Language Learning
10:00 - 10:15 Recess
10:15 - 10:45 Language
10:50 - 11:15 Computer Lab (In Room 13)
11:15 - 11:50 Math
11:50 - 12:10 Seatwork Time
12:15 - 12:50 Lunch
12:50 - 1:15 Storytime
1:15 - 1:45 Journal / Native American Unit
1:45 - 2:00 Recess
2:00 - 2:40 Social Studies / Art -- Native American Unit
2:40 Clean-up
2:50 Dismissal

Please feel free to drop in any time, and remember, if tomorrow doesn't work out for you, you are always welcome to visit.

Sincerely,

Carol Mendruzzo



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AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK
PARENT VISITATION DAY
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH

Come join us for the day or part of the day during American Education Week! Here is our agenda for Thursday so you can plan accordingly.

8:20 Morning Opening
8:45 Journal
9:10 Gym
9:40 Language Arts
10:00 Recess
10:15 Restroom/Drink Break
10:30 Library Lesson with Mrs. Anderson
11:15 Reading
12:15 Lunch
12:50 Math
1:30 Social Studies
1:45 Recess
2:00 Show and Tell
2:15 Computer Lab
2:40 Closing and get ready for home
2:50 Dismissal

Come for any part of the day! Get a glimpse in the life of a 1st grader!

Hope to see you.
Laura Wells

Appendix T

Thank You for Visitation Day Attendance

Dear Parents and Visitors.

We want to thank you all for taking time out of your day yesterday to come to school and spend some time in our classroom. We hope you enjoyed taking a look at your child's "job". The kids were very excited to have you there!! It really means a great deal to them to see that you are interested in what they do!!

Please remember if you were unable to attend during American Education Week, you are always welcome to come and visit. Feel free to drop in any time..even if only for a few minutes. We're always happy to have "company" !!

Sincerely,
Laura Wells and Carol Mindrup

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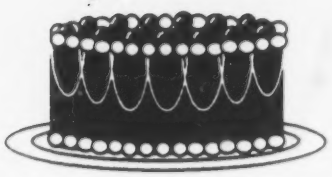
Appendix U

Thank You for Ice Cream Social/Cake Auction Attendance



THANK YOU, THANK YOU. THANK YOU !!!!

THE ICECREAM SOCIAL/CAKE WALK WAS A GREAT SUCCESS THANKS TO ALL OF YOU !

The money that was raised last night (over $1200) will be going to support our new reading program for parents and their children in the lower grades. Thank you for all your help and support, and a BIG thank you to our PTA !!!

Appendix V

Take Home Activity #2

Dear Parents,

Our first take home activity--the fire dog puppets--was a great success!! We had 100% participation, and our puppies made a super display. We hope you got a chance to see them at conferences.

Today your first grader is bringing home a take home activity for December. Enclosed you will find a pair of very plain, white mittens. We are asking that you and your child decorate these mittens, so that we can display them on our outside bulletin boards for the month of December. We have been discussing patterns and symmetry in math, so we're hoping to put these concepts to use when decorating this matching pair of mittens. Please feel free to decorate them using anything you wish.

As part of this project, we are also asking that our first graders memorize this simple poem about mittens.

"Thumbs in the thumb's place,
Fingers altogether.
This is the song
We sing in mitten weather!"

Everyone who is able to recite the poem unassisted will receive an added bonus!

Thank you so much for making these take home projects such a success!! We hope they are giving you and your child a chance to spend some special time together. We're asking that the completed mittens be returned by Tuesday, December 1. Please be sure to come by and see our mitten display in December!!

Thank you !!!!
Mrs. Laura Wells and Mrs. Carol Mindrup

Appendix W

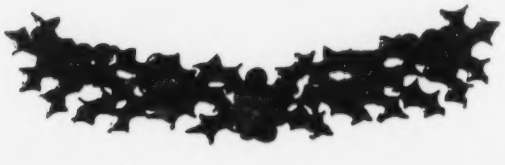
Invitation to Christmas Program

Dear Parents and Grandparents,

You are cordially invited to our annual Christmas Program on Wednesday, December 16 in our gym. There will be a morning performance for grandparents beginning at 9:15 am , and an afternoon performance for parents beginning at 1:00 pm. (Please feel free to attend the performance that is more convenient for you--the designations are to help keep one performance from becoming too over-crowded!)

Your first grader has worked very hard and is anxious to have you see their program. We hope you'll be able to attend!!!

Merry Christmas---
Carol Mindrup and Laura Wells



Appendix X

"All About You' Explanatory Letter

Dear Parents and Grandparents,

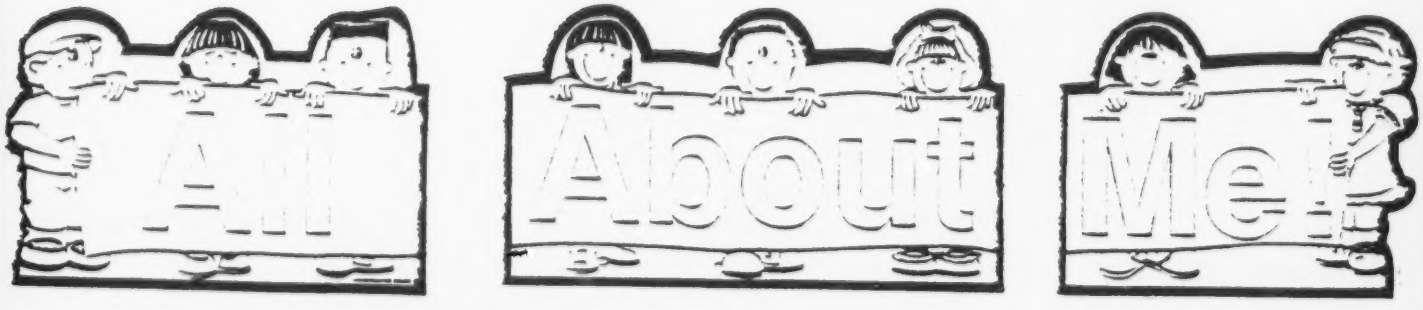
We are beginning a bulletin board in our rooms entitled "All About Me." Every student will have the opportunity to be the focus of this bulletin board for a week. A checklist will be coming home prior to your child's scheduled "week" requesting pictures and other items. The back of the checklist has an interview sheet for you and your child to fill out and return to school. This information will be shared with the rest of the class during their special "week."

We would like to invite any grandparent or parent to school during their child's special "week" to be interviewed by the class. This will take only 10-15 minutes of your time. We will be working on interviewing skills and questioning strategies. Children love to see their parents and grandparents at school in such a positive light!

If there is a certain week that would be better for you please let us know as soon as possible. We will be preparing a schedule to begin January 11th. If you have any questions please contact us.

Thank you.

Carol Mindrup and Laura Wells



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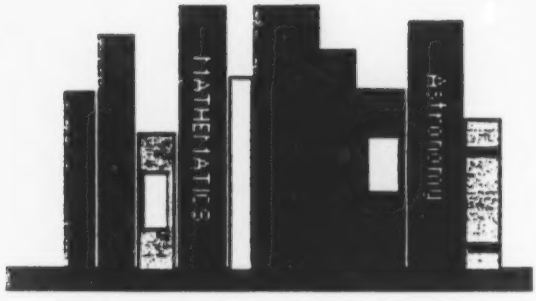
Appendix Y

Invitation to Family Reading / Math Night



Dear Parents,

We would like to cordially invite you and your first grade student to a Family Reading and Math Activities Night on Monday, January 25th from 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm in Franklin's gym. We will have reading and math stations throughout the gym for you and your child to participate in together. There will be a brief introduction of the planned activities at 6:30, and the remainder of the hour will belong to you and your first grader.

Refreshments and prizes will be provided. Please mark your calendars for Monday, January 25th ---- we look forward to seeing you there!!!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Laura Wells, Mrs. Carol Mindrup
and Mrs. Sheri Bradley

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Appendix Z

Invitation to Staff Chili Supper

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT !!!

FRANKLIN STAFF CHILI SUPPER

5:00 TO 7:00 P.M.

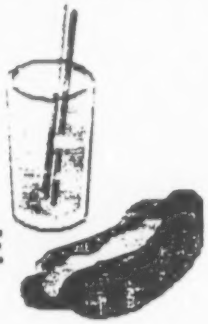
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR

CHILI - DESSERT - DRINK - $2.50

OR

HOT DOG - DESSERT - DRINK - $2.50

EXTRA CHILI - $1.25 OR EXTRA HOT DOG - $1.00



COME JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL FRANKLIN FAMILY OUTING. THE FOOD IS GOOD, AND WE WILL DO THE CLEAN - UP !!!!

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Appendix AA

Reminder for Family Reading / Math Night

JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER

Dear Parents and Grandparents,

We would like to remind you to mark your calendars for Monday, January 25th. We will be having our First Grade Family Reading and Math Night in our own Franklin Gym from 6:30-7:30. Plan on spending the hour with your first grader going from reading stations to math stations! Remember that refreshments and prizes will provided. We look forward to seeing you there!!!!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Carol Mindrup
Mrs. Laura Wells
Mrs. Sheri Bradley

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Appendix BB

Final Reminder for Family Reading / Math Night

Just a quick reminder...

Tonight's the night!! We're looking forward to seeing you at tonight's First Grade Reading and Math Night.We'll meet you in the gym at 6:30, and we promise to have you on your way by 7:30, with a bag full of goodies !!

We really hope to see you there!!!

Appendix CC

Thank You for Family Reading / Math Night

Dear Parents and Guests,

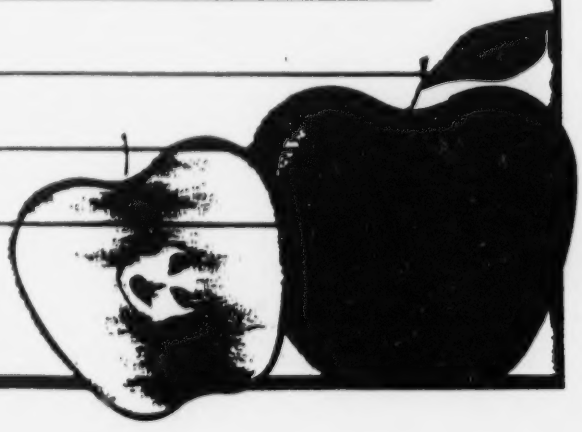
Thank you so much for attending our First Grade Family Reading and Math Night! We were so pleased that so many of you were able to join us. We hope you found it fun and worthwhile. (We had a great time!!)

The one hour that you spent with your first grader really meant a lot! Thank you, again, for taking the time to join us!!

Sincerely,

Laura Wells, Sheri Bradley and Carol Mindrup

Any comments ??_____



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Dear First Graders,

Thank you so much for bringing your parents and friends to our First Grade Reading and Math Night. You all behaved so well and really were able to spend some great time with your family. We're so proud of you!! You made the evening perfect !!!

Love,

Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Bradley and

Mrs. Mindrup

What did you think of our Reading and Math Night? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Appendix DD

Follow-Up Parent Survey

NAME _____
(optional)

PARENT SURVEY

1. HOW OFTEN DO YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING AT SCHOOL?

1	2	3	4	5
Seldom		Occasionally		Daily

2. HOW OFTEN DO YOU AND YOUR CHILD READ TOGETHER AT HOME?

1	2	3	4	5
Seldom		Occasionally		Daily

3. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACTIVITIES AT THIS SCHOOL?

1	2	3	4	5
Dissatisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied

4. HAVE YOU ENJOYED DOING THE TAKE-HOME PROJECTS WITH YOUR CHILD?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Particularly		O.K.		Very Much

5. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE ADEQUATELY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING AT SCHOOL?

_____ YES _____ NO

6. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO ATTEND SPECIAL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR CHILD?

_____ YES _____ NO

We would appreciate any comments you have about your child's first grade experience.

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY !!!

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Appendix EE

Follow-Up Student Survey

STUDENT SURVEY

NAME _____

1. DO YOU TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SCHOOL? YES NO

2. DO YOU AND YOUR PARENTS READ TOGETHER AT HOME? YES NO

3. WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR PARENTS TO SEE WHAT YOU'RE DOING AT SCHOOL? YES NO

4. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT FIRST GRADE?

5. DID YOU ENJOY...

	Yes	No	Didn't Do
FIRE SAFETY PUPPETS			
MITTENS			
FAMILY READING AND MATH NIGHT			
JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT			
PARENT VISITORS			

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